

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 04540 171224Z

51

ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 EB-11 INT-08

AID-20 DRC-01 /199 W

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R 170903Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9483

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USINT ALGIERS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 4540

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MO, SP, SS

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA

REF: (A) USUN 2393; (B) RABAT 3260

1. SUMMARY: HEAD OF OFFICE OF SPANISH SAHARA IN
PRESIDENCY BELIEVES THAT MOROCCAN KING HAS STIRRED UP
SPANISH SAHARA ISSUE FOR TWO MAIN REASONS: (1) INTERNAL
POLITICAL MOTIVES, (2) IMPROVEMENT OF ALREADY STRONG
WORLD POSITION IN PHOSPHATES PRODUCTION BY ADDITION OF
SAHARAN RESERVES AND CURRENT PRODUCTION CAPACITY.
PRE-EMPTION OF ALGERIA IS ALSO PROBABLY A FACTOR. GOS
WILL CONTINUE ON GRADUAL COURSE OF DECOLONIALIZATION
LEADING TO AREA'S "INDEPENDENCE" IN CONFORMITY WITH
POPULATION'S EXPRESSED WISHES. NEW STATUTE OF SELF-
ADMINISTRATION OF AREA WAS APPROVED BY SAHARAN ASSEMBLY
JULY 6 AND IS UNDERGOING FINAL TOUCHES BEFORE BEING SUB-
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PAGE 02 MADRID 04540 171224Z

MITTED TO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND FRANCO FOR DEFINITIVE

APPROVAL. GOS DOES NOT ANTICIPATE SERIOUS BORDER INCIDENTS EVEN THOUGH ONE MINOR INCIDENT TOOK PLACE THREE WEEKS AGO. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY OFFICER CALLED ON DIRECTOR GENERAL OF PROMOTION OF THE SAHARA IN PRESIDENCY, EDUARDO BLANCO, JULY 16. BLANCO TOOK OVER THIS DIRECTORATE IN APRIL 1974 FOLLOWING EIGHT YEARS AS HEAD OF SPANISH SECURITY SERVICES (DGS). THE DIRECTORATE HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SUPERVISING SPANISH SAHARAN ADMINISTRATION. BLANCO PROVIDED FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

3. IN HIS VIEW, RECENT CAMPAIGN IN MOROCCO WITH RESPECT TO SPANISH SAHARA WAS UNLEASHED BY KING PARTLY TO FOCUS POPULAR ATTENTION ON ULTRA-NATIONALIST ISSUE AS MEANS OF COPING WITH DIFFICULT INTERNAL ISSUES. SECONDLY, MOROCCO WAS ANXIOUS TO EXTEND ITS INFLUENCE OVER WORLD MARKET OF PHOSPHATES BY ADDITION OF SAHARAN RESERVES AND PRODUCTION CAPACITY. BLANCO SAID MOROCCANS UNDOUBTEDLY KNEW THAT SAHARAN PRODUCTION THIS YEAR REACHED PROFITABLE LEVEL FOR FIRST TIME AND SPANISH INVESTMENT WAS BEGINNING TO PAY OFF. PRESENT MOROCCAN PRODUCTION OF TEN MILLION TONS ANNUALLY, HE SAID, COULD BE DOUBLED BY ADDITION OF SAHARAN CAPACITY SCHEDULED TO REACH TEN MILLION TONS BY 1980. A THIRD REASON FOR THE MOROCCAN CAMPAIGN WAS TO PRE-EMPT ALGERIAN INFLUENCE.

4. BLANCO SAID THAT ONLY DANGER WAS THAT MOROCCAN CAMPAIGN COULD POSSIBLY GET OUT OF HAND. GOS WAS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED BY THIS POSSIBILITY, BUT DID NOT BELIEVE THAT MOROCCANS WOULD TAKE IRREVERSIBLE STEPS SUCH AS EFFORT TO INVADE SAHARA. BLANCO EXPRESSED COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN AREA'S MILITARY SECURITY. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A SMALL MOROCCAN FORCE HAD FIRED ON A SPANISH BORDER POST THREE WEEKS AGO BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO CASUALTIES. ANY CASUALTIES IN SAHARA, HE SAID, WOULD BE HARD TO CONCEAL FROM SPANISH PUBLIC BECAUSE OF PROBLEM OF PREVENTING NEXT-OF-KIN FROM TALKING TO PRESS.

5. GOS, ACCORDING TO BLANCO, HAD INTEREST IN PREVENTING CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MADRID 04540 171224Z

SITUATION DEVELOPING IN MOROCCO WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO OVERTHROW OF MONARCHY. OUTCOME IN SUCH EVENTUALITY, HE SAID, WOULD BE UNPREDICTABLE REGIME ALONG LINES OF LIBYAN EXAMPLE OF QADHAFI. BY IMPLICATION, BLANCO SEEMED TO BE SAYING THAT SPAIN DID NOT WANT SPANISH SAHARA ISSUE TO GET OUT OF HAND FOR THIS REASON AS WELL AS OTHERS.

6. AT SAME TIME, GOS COULD NOT ACCEPT EARLIER GOM PROPOSALS GUARANTEEING SPANISH USE OF MILITARY BASES IN SAHARA, ETC. IN EXCHANGE FOR MOROCCAN CONTROL OVER AREA. NEITHER WAS GOS IN POSITION TO GO INTO JOINT EXPLOITATION SCHEME OF SAHARAN PHOSPHATE DEPOSITS WITH MOROCCO; GOS COULD NOT DISPOSE OF RESOURCES BELONGING TO SAHARANS AND EXCLUDE THEM FROM PROCEEDS OF EXPLOITATION. LASTLY, GOS HAD TO ENSURE THAT FRIENDLY STATE CONTROLLED SAHARA, WHICH WAS LOCATED ONLY 100 KILOMETERS FROM NEAREST ISLAND OF CANARIES.

7. BLANCO REVIEWED SPAIN'S COMMITMENT TO CARRY OUT A REFERENDUM UNDER UN AUSPICES, BUT MADE UNMISTAKABLY CLEAR THAT GOS WOULD NOT ALLOW ARAB STATES TO EXERCISE DOMINANT VOICE IN SUPERVISION. ON ISSUE OF MOROCCAN CLAIMS THAT LARGE NUMBERS OF SAHARANS IN MOROCCO SHOULD VOTE ON REFERENDUM, BLANCO SAID THAT THERE WERE INDEED APPROXIMATELY 10-15,000 (NOT 20-25,000) SAHARANS LIVING IN SOUTHERN MOROCCO ADJACENT TO SAHARA, BUT THEY WOULD PROBABLY VOTE FOR INDEPENDENCE LIKE THEIR KINSMEN IN SAHARA, IF GIVEN THE CHANCE. (HE DID NOT INDICATE, HOWEVER, THAT SPAIN WOULD AGREE TO THEIR VOTING.) THIS GROUP BELONGED TO SAHARA'S LARGEST TRIBE AND HAD BEEN CUT OFF FROM THE REST OF THE SAHARA WHEN SPAIN AND MOROCCO SETTLED THEIR BORDER IN 1957 (REF B). ACCORDING TO BLANCO, MANY SAHARANS WERE RESENTFUL THAT SPAIN FAILED TO INSIST ON FIXING BORDER FARTHER NORTH TO INCLUDE THESE PEOPLE IN GREATER SAHARA.

8. GOS WAS NOW STUDYING AND PUTTING FINAL TOUCHES ON NEW STATUTE OF SELF-ADMINISTRATION FOR SAHARA WHICH HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AND APPROVED IN THREE-DAY SESSION OF SAHARAN ASSEMBLY, JULY 4-6 (REF A). ORIGINAL DRAFT HAS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MADRID 04540 171224Z

BEEN PREPARED IN BLANCO'S OFFICE AND CLEARED THROUGHOUT GOS PRIOR TO SUBMISSION TO ASSEMBLY WHICH HAD MADE SOME MINOR CHANGES. ONCE APPROVED BY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, STATUTE WILL BE SUBMITTED TO FRANCO FOR APPROVAL AND PROMULGATION.

9. BLANCO SAID GOS WAS PREPARING SAHARA FOR EVENTUAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN STAGES. SAHARANS, HE SAID, WERE FEARFUL THAT GOS MIGHT BE PRESSURED TO RELINQUISH AREA PREMATURELY UNDER INFLUENCE OF PROJECTED DECOLONIALIZATION OF PORTUGUESE COLONIES. BLANCO THOUGHT LATTER PROCESS, EVEN FOLLOWING MOST RECENT "LEFTWARD SHIFT" IN PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT, WOULD STILL TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME BECAUSE OF ENORMOUS PORTUGUESE INTERESTS IN ITS COLONIES. SPAIN HAD SOME TIME, THEREFORE, TO PREPARE

FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT IN SAHARA AND HAD SOME FLEXIBILITY INASMUCH AS IT WAS NOT BOUND TO SAHARA BY AS MANY ECONOMIC INTERESTS AS WERE PORTUGUESE WITH THEIR COLONIES. GOS ONLY HOPED TO RECOVER ITS INVESTMENT IN PHOSPHATES AND TO CONVERT PHOSPHATE EXTRACTION INTO SOURCE OF INCOME FOR SAHARANS AS MEANS OF MAKING FUTURE INDEPENDENT COUNTRY MORE VIABLE THAN IT IS TODAY.

10. FOREIGN MINISTRY ISSUED "COMMUNIQUE" JULY 12 DESCRIBING GOS' RECENT STEPS IN PROMOTING SELF-DETERMINATION FOR SAHARA. STATEMENT ALSO REVIEWS POINTS MADE IN LETTER DATED JULY 10 FROM PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SPAIN TO UN TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL DESCRIBING RECENT MOROCCAN CAMPAIGN. STATEMENT CONCLUDES BY SAYING THAT GOS HAS NOT INITIATED A NEW POLICY FOR SAHARA BUT HAS CONTINUED TO FULFILL ITS COMMITMENT TO SAHARAN POPULATION FOR SELF-DETERMINATION OF THEIR FUTURE.
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